

For he does not distribute his Favours to the Sons of Men without Distinction, but passes an impartial Judgment upon all their Actions, before he resolves to Reward or Punish. Though he may not always deal with the Righteous according to the Opinion they have of their own Merit; yet he will always Act according to the Principles of Justice and Equity, and shew a particular Regard to the Persons and Authority of religious Princes, unless by the Sins of the People he is provoked to *destroy* their King. This we find exemplified in the Persons of those wicked Men who ruled over *Israel*; they were successively punished for their Iniquity, their Lives and their Reigns shortened by the Hands of their Enemies; whilst those who lived in *Obedience* to God's Laws, were constantly *protected* by him, and their Thrones attended by his Guardian Angels. And this he did to demonstrate, that as he is the Creator of all Things, he can dispose of them according to his Pleasure; as he is Judge of all Men, he will Act according unto Right. Those whom he puts down, must acknowledge his Justice; and those whom he sets up, must adore his Goodness.

When our Saviour observed, that some People in his time were over solicitous about the Affairs of this World, and trusted rather to their own Care and Industry, than the Divine Beneficence; he checks their unreasonable Disquiet, by assuring them, that the most minute Things in Nature are not hid from his All-seeing Eye; and, if, as he argues, (a) (a) Luk. 12. 27. *God clothes the Lilies of the Field in such an extraordinary manner, as to make their Raiment far Superior to that of Solomon in all his Glory; (b) If a Sparrow does (b) Matt. 10. 29, 30. not fall to the Ground without his Allowance; If he*

does not suffer the Hairs of our Head to go unnumbered; it is utterly impossible any Man who is a sincere Member of the Christian Church, should believe God's Power is under any Limitation, but that

Secondly, It extends to Kingdoms and Empires, as well as Things of an inferior Nature. And here let it be remembered, that under this Head I am upon Christian Principles, to account for some of the most remarkable Changes of Government; which happened in the last Century.

That absolute Sovereignty God has over us, and that indisputable Right he has to govern us, make the Scriptures frequently resolve all Acts of his Power, into so many Acts of his Will, and won't allow us to seek for any other Cause; the Pleasure of Almighty God being sufficient to take away all Scruples which may arise in Men's Minds, who have any Idea of his Essence or Attributes, for as he is Infinite in Justice and Wisdom, so every Act of his must exactly agree with both those Attributes, and will consequently give full Satisfaction to all those who think themselves obliged by Conscience and Religion, to submit to his Decrees. Or if any should impiously assume that Power to themselves, which originally appertains to God, and profanely glory in their temporal Wealth or Grandeur, he may compel them by his Judgments to own his Authority, and make the same Declaration *Nebuchadnezzar* did after his Understanding returned unto him: (a) *That all the Inhabitants of the Earth are reputed as nothing in Comparison of God; and that he doth according to his Will in all the Army of Heaven, and among the Inhabitants of the Earth; and none can stay his Hand, or say unto him, what dost thou? 'Tis his inherent Right*

(a) Dan.
4. 35.

(a) to

(a) to dispose of *Thrones and Dominions, Principalities and Powers, whether they be Visible or Invisible, in Heaven or in Earth*; to put down, and to set up whomsoever he pleases. (a) Col. 1. 16.

Notwithstanding the positive Declaration here made, and many more to the same purpose in the Holy Scriptures; new Notions have been started, and Schemes of Government never known to this Nation, till the unhappy Subversion of Monarchy by the Martyrdom of the best of Kings, have been vigorously defended: Government it self has been called a mere Humane Institution; not the Ordinance of God, but of Man: Kings, who are undoubtedly God's Vice-gerents, are said to receive their Power from the People, and upon any Miscarriage in their Office, made liable to be punished, as to them shall seem meet and convenient. To support these Opinions, they would persuade us, that the Doctrines taught by St. Paul in the 13th of the *Romans*, and by St. Peter in the 2d Chapter of his first Epistle, are either Contradictory one to the other, or that the latter of these great Apostles intends to explain the meaning of the former, and from thence they would willingly resolve the Power of the Prince into the Hands of the People. But this Mistake will easily be cleared to those who will impartially consider, that the Apostles speak of Magistracy in different Respects; the one having an immediate Regard to its original Institution, does with very great Reason call it the Ordinance of God; because all Terrestrial Power is derived from him, and no Person was ever yet invested with the Government of a Nation, but he owed his Authority either to God's Permission or Appointment. The other calls it the Ordinance of Man,

Man, either because it was exercised among Men, was designed and instituted by the God of Order, for the Peace, Welfare, and common Benefit of all Societies; or else, because the Governour was a Subordinate Magistrate, received his Commission immediately from the Favour of the Emperor, and upon that Score may be said to be a Humane Ordinance. These Considerations joined with the particular Charge he gives the dispersed *Jews*, to submit to all that were in Authority, *Whether it were to the King as Supreme, or unto Governours, as to them who were sent by him*, seem sufficient to satisfy all reasonable Christians of the Intention of the Holy Apostle. Besides,

The utter Aversion the *Jews* had to Subjection in general, the Rebellion they were at that very Time contriving, the excessive Regard they had to Liberty and Property, which could not possibly be secured as they thought, but by opposing the Established Government, made *St. Peter* take so much Care of those he had converted to the Christian Faith, lest by the Insinuations of their old Friends, and the Prejudices which were fixed in them by the Traditions of the Elders, they might be drawn into the Sin of Rebellion, and bring a lasting Scandal on themselves, and their Holy Religion.

Conscious was he of the Guilt he had contracted by his intemperate Zeal, the unwarrantable Resistance he formerly made to the Civil Magistrate, and the sharp Rebuke he received from his dear Lord for it; and for that Reason resolves to make the best Attonement he could for his past Miscarriage, and by his Doctrine prevent those he had converted from falling into the like dangerous Error. He was fully
satisfied,

satisfied, that the Powers, though *Pagan*, were ordained of God; that the Ends of his Providence are fully answered by the worst of Princes; that Tyrants and Usurpers are many Times sent as a Scourge to an impious Nation. when by a long continuance in Sins of the blackest Nature, the Inhabitants provoke God to shew his just Indignation against them. It is not then to be expected, that he should be the immediate Executioner of his own Judgments; no, he frequently appoints other Instruments for that purpose. Sometimes he suffers the Government to be shocked by Civil Wars, and intestine Commotions; at other Times he permits the most monstrous Rebellions to be Prosperous, or foreign Invasions to be Successful; and then to complete their Temporal Calamities, (a) sets those that hate them, to rule over them. But the severest Effect of God's Displeasure, is the Destruction of the true Religion; when Her Ordinances are slighted, Her Ministers contemned, Schisms encouraged, Heresies connived at, and the Orthodox Faith utterly discountenanced. Such has too often been the miserable Fate of this Kingdom. But I know not by what Infatuation, we have been always blind to our Misfortunes, and through an unaccountable *Supineness* could never see our own Danger, till we were ready for Ruin, could never be made apprehensive of God's Judgments, till we were ripe for the Execution of them. This was too evident, when Religion was driven out of our Churches by *Hypocrisy*, and Fraud was bartered for Justice; when Rebellion past for Loyalty, and Treason for Allegiance; when an Affront put upon the Crown, was esteemed a meritorious Act towards God, and insulting his Vice-gerent was doing Honour to their Creator.

Creator. These horrible Crimes brought such dire Calamities upon us, as nothing but Anarchy, Confusion, and every evil Work could possibly produce. The *Church* was rent in Pieces by *Schism*, *Sectaries* of all Kinds tolerated, the most monstrous Novelties started, the true *Religion* barbarously persecuted, and at last together with the *Power*, the very *Form* of *Godliness* was utterly lost. That Art which had been so highly advantageous to them, till the People were cajoled into their Interest, was laid aside; when they had got the *Wealth* and *Power* of the Nation into their Hands, Villany appeared Bare-faced, and Iniquity rode in Triumph, till all was completed in the *Murder* of our *King* and *Monarchy*, the entire Dissolution of the *Established Government*, and the setting up of *Tyranny* in several Degrees, and sundry Kinds of Forms; such as the *Israelites* themselves scarcely ever felt, either in *Egypt* or *Babylon*.

When we had tasted the Severity of God's Judgments, and drank plentifully of the Vials of his Wrath; when after a long Series of War and Desolation, we were made sensible of the Power of those Men, who would not suffer *Bishops* to lord it over *God's Heritage*, nor his *Anointed* to bear the *Sword of Justice*; when they had shewed with how much Barbarity they could wield the *Rod of Iron*, who would not endure the *Golden Scepter*, with how much Cruelty the poor *Episcopal Clergy* were harassed, afflicted, tormented; (a) How part of the People fell by the *Sword*, and part were scattered into all the Winds, till we became a *Reproach*, and a *Taunt*, an *Instruction*, and an *Astonishment* unto the *Nations* that are round about us. Then was God pleased in Wrath to remember Mercy, and by distracting the Councils of those

(a) Ezek.
5, 12, 15.

those who had lately been the *Executioners* of his Judgments, made them now the *Instruments* of his Mercy, and by their happy Divisions carried on the *Restoration* of the *Royal Family*, and in it of *Monarchy*, *Episcopacy*, and the *true Religion*.

It is impossible any Man who is acquainted with the History of those Times, and the Characters of those Men who usurped the Supreme Authority, should ever believe they were advanced to it for their own *Righteousness*; no, (a) it was for the *Transgression* of the Land, that the Princes thereof were many; for when they had by their *illegal Proceedings*, their *unjust Judgments*, by *Persecution*, *Tyranny*, and *Oppression*, accomplished the Designs of the just Omnipotent God, in the Punishment of a Disobedient and profligate Nation, then was he graciously pleased to turn again the Captivity of *Zion*; whilst we stood amazed at the wonderful Act, and looked like a People who rather thought it a Dream than a Reality, and have ever since neglected to make that *prudent, religious Use* of it, which so inestimable a Blessing deservedly demands. The *Restoration* of *Monarchy* in the **RIGHTFUL HEREDITARY LINE**, the *Establishment* of *Justice* in a *Legal and equitable Way*, the *Restitution* of the *Church* to Her *Jurisdiction*, and Her *Sons* to their *lawful Revenues*, of the *People* to their *Rights*, and the *King* to his *Prerogative*, are the great Blessings we this Day commemorate. Blessings, so extraordinary in themselves, so unparalleled in their Consequences, that we cannot possibly express our Gratitude in such a becoming manner, as they deserve. (b) What then shall we render unto the Lord, or how shall we make a just Acknowledgment for all his Benefits? Let us pay our Vows unto the Lord, now in the Presence of all his People; let Sincerity accompany

(a) Prov.
28. 2.

(b) Psal.
116. 12,
14.

our Devotions, and Innocence our Feasts ; let not this auspicious Day be profaned by Excess and Riot, nor the irregular Observation of it give the Enemy cause to ridicule and blaspheme it, to turn that into Scoff and Merriment, which ought to be solemnized with Gravity and Devotion.

How it comes to pass, I know not, but some, even of our own Communion, have thought it high Time to lay aside that Fast which was occasioned by our Miseries, and this Festival which received its Institution from the Restoration of our Peace and Prosperity ; upon a Supposition, that they minister only to Strife and Debate, to Envy and Contention. Indeed I should gladly join with them in this, could they give us any tolerable Assurance, that the Sin were sufficiently attoned for, or that the Enemies of our Church and Constitution had laid aside those Principles, which were the real Cause of all our Woes. But, when instead of that, we see the old Factious Principles revived, and improved, the Lawfulness of Resistance vigorously asserted, nay, made a necessary Christian Duty ; it is impossible to render them so truly odious in the Eyes of the People, as the Nature of the Crimes deserves : All that we can do, is to guard them from such abominable Opinions, as are abhorred by God, and all good Men ; and on the contrary to cultivate the Duties of Loyalty, and Obedience ; since none can break through them, without doing Dishonour to God, while he affronts the Power which he hath set up ; and we well know, *That no Man can stretch forth his Hand against the Lord's Anointed, and be guiltless.*

Permit me now to draw one Inference from what has been said, which seems proper to this Day's Solemnity, as well as necessary in the present Age, and especially

especially at this Juncture, when nothing can so effectually settle Peace at Home, as a Religious Sense, and a Conscientious Performance of our Duty; and I shall then conclude.

If the Portion of Scripture upon which I have discoursed, and the Doctrine advanced from it, be true; if God, as Judge, *puts down one, and sets up another*; if the Powers which be, *are ordained of God*, and are immediately commissioned by him; if the greatest Monarch on Earth receives his Deputation from Heaven, and has no Authority but what is communicated to him from the Supreme Governour of the Universe; then will it naturally follow, that Obedience is the least Tribute his Subjects can pay him; if not out of a Respect to his Person, yet out of a Religious Deference to the God he represents; lest they be found to despise him in the Person of the Magistrate, and provoke him to execute the Vengeance due to their Contempt.

Could we suppose Kings infallible, so perfectly Wise, that they could not be deceived, and so perfectly Good, that they would not attempt any thing that should look like an Infringement of the Rights and Properties of their People, require nothing contrary to the Laws of God, and their Country; then would it be no hard Matter to state the Measures of Obedience to the Civil Magistrates. But since they are liable to the same Infirmities, and consequently to the same Mistakes as other Men; since they may be imposed on themselves, and may impose Things upon their Subjects, destructive to the Peace and Welfare of the Nation; prejudicial, if not absolutely repugnant to our Holy Religion, and may by Persecution endeavour to force that Obedience they cannot lawfully Command: (a) In that Case, *we must obey God rather than Man, taking our Sufferings patiently, and thinking* (a) Acts 5. 29, 41.

it our greatest Glory to suffer Shame for the Name of the Lord Jesus. We may indeed by Entreaties, Addresses, Perswasions, Arguments, or any other peaceable Methods, endeavour to obtain a Redress of Grievances; but when all the Legal Ways prove ineffectual, we must not then imitate the Examples of the Modern Enthusiasts, do that by Force, which cannot be obtained by Entreaty; but the Orthodox Christians must be our Patterns, who in all Ages of the Church patiently submitted, when they could not actively obey; thereby owning the Power, though abused in the most barbarous tyrannical Manner, to be from God, leaving the Revenge of all their Wrongs to him that judges Righteously. They could not endure the thought of asserting their Liberty, or defending their Religion by Arms or Violence; *Resistance of the Lawful Sovereign*, being a Tenet utterly abhorred, and universally condemned, both in the Eastern and Western Churches.

(a) Matt.
17. 27.

(b) Matt.
22. 17.

Let those who doubt of, dislike, or oppose this Doctrine, examine our Saviour's Conduct while he sojourned here on Earth, and they will find it ratified in every Instance, where the Power of the Civil Magistrate is concerned, even from his Birth to his Death, from the Manger to the Sepulcher. (a) When Tribute was demanded of him, lest he should offend, by his Refusal encourage the People to do the same, and by that means foment a Disturbance amongst them, he wrought a Miracle to pay that Debt to the State his own narrow Circumstances, and those of his Apostles rendered him otherwise unable to discharge. When the *Herodians* came with subtlety to tripan him, and draw him into such a Snare, as would certainly make him obnoxious to the Laws of the Land. (b) They asked him, *Whether it was lawful to give Tribute to Caesar,*

far, or not? He then without Exception commands all People, who were under the Influence of his Doctrine, *To render to Cæsar, the Things which are Cæsars.* (a) (a) Matt. When he was betrayed by the treacherous Disciple *Judas*, and could have commanded twelve Legions of Angels to rescue him from the Hands of his Enemies; yet rather than he would be guilty of such an heinous Crime, as to oppose the Civil Magistrate, he patiently resigns himself to their Will, and rebukes *Peter* for his Resistance, though it was made in Defense of *injured Innocence, his Religion, and his God.* If ever it had been justifiable, it must certainly have been so in this Case, and surely none so able to determine the Point, as the Author of our Faith, and the Founder of our Religion; but notwithstanding these popular and plausible Pretenses which might have been made use of then, as well as in After-ages; in the Tragical Close of his Life; (b) He acknowledges the Power (b) Joh. of *Pilate* to be from above, though he then lay under 19. 11. an unjust Condemnation, and behaved himself with Meekness and Submission; (c) *leaving us an Example,* (c) 1 Pet. *that we should follow his Steps.* And if God be for us 2. 21. in his Doctrine and Example, in his Words and Actions, who can, who dares be against us?

This was exactly transcribed by the Holy Apostles. St. Peter requires (d) *Submission* for the Lord's sake; (d) 1 Pet. and St. Paul (e) commands *Obedience* upon pain of 2. 13. *Damnation.* And if any Humane Authority could in- (e) Rom. 13. 2. crease the Value of the Sacred Oracles, or make the Doctrine contained in them more efficacious, we shall find nothing has been wanting in that Respect, that could give Life or Energy to them: For it has been confirmed by Councils, asserted by the *Apologists*, *Established* by our Excellent Church, and taught in Her *Homilies, Articles, and Liturgy* in general Terms, without Reserve, without Exception. For

(a) Mark
13. 31.

For the Truth of this, I appeal to the Publick Writings of those Persons who now oppose it. Upon what Views they altered their Opinions, I know not; but this I believe will be the Doctrine of the Church of Christ, as long as his Gospel lasts, which must be till the general Dissolution of all Things, (a) *Heaven and Earth shall pass away: but his Word shall not pass away.*

It being hence evident, that the Primitive Christians thought Obedience, or Submission, even to Nero, the most barbarous Prince, and most inhuman Tyrant, a Duty so far incumbent upon them, that nothing could cancel or abolish it. How highly culpable must those People be in the Sight of God, and all good Men, who are so uneasy under the present Administration, that they industriously oppose those very Measures, which immediately tend to the ease of the Subject, and the Security of their Prince. If we examine their Words and Actions, which have always been esteemed the best Expositors of Men's Minds; we may, without a Breach of Charity, conclude, they have no other Design than to embarrass Affairs, foment the present Divisions, and enflame the Nation. For 'tis plain, they cannot be prevailed upon by Reason, Gratitude, or the common Interest of the Nation, to forbear their restless Endeavours, and lay aside their contumacious Behaviour: But in downright Defiance of *Law and Gospel, Subscriptions and Oaths*, endeavour to undermine our Constitution, and to Ruin the best Established Government in the World. Should those who with an uncommon Assurance, have vindicated the *Lawfulness of Resistance*, and sounded aloud the Trumpet of *Rebellion*, accomplish their wicked and ambitious Ends, I am sure none could hope to fare well upon the Change, but the *impious Tools* of the Party, who must afterwards be made *Slaves* to the *Conquerors*, and

and *Drudges* to their *Sin*. All else must share the common Calamities, and how great those will be where War and Desolation Reign, none can so well tell, as those that have, and still do feel them. Pray God this may never be our Case, and that neither we ourselves, nor distant Posterity may ever feel the miserable Effects of them.

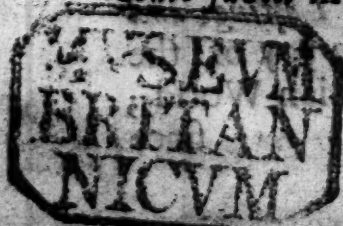
Tho' this Doctrine will be ungrateful to some People, till they can have the Government modelled according to their own Fancy; and to others, till they can get it entirely to themselves, or be made Principals in the Administration of it; yet, I am sure, during Her *Majesties* Auspicious and merciful Reign, no good Subject, or true Son of the Church of *England*, will ever shew any uneasyness at it. The great Desire She has always shewed to reward Merit, to punish Vice, to relieve the injured at Home, and to defend the oppressed Abroad, to promote Piety by Her Practice, and Religion by Her Example; these excellent *Virtues*, joined with the great *Zeal* She has always expressed for the Established Church, and the *Compassion* She has shewed to those who dissent from us, are enough not only to satisfy Her Friends of the Sincerity of Her Intentions; but reconcile Her most implacable Enemies to Her Person and Government.

And now since we are blessed with such an excellent Prince, and the Persons she has made Choice of to advise Her in these Times of Difficulty and Peril, seem truly Zealous to promote the Welfare of their Country, and labour earnestly to put a seasonable Stop to the unnecessary *Consumption* of our *Treasure*, and the *Effusion* of *Christian Blood*; to guard us from further Inconveniences, by such a *Secure, Lasting, and Honourable Peace*, as will not only be the Joy of the British Nation, but of the whole Christian World;
since

since nothing can so effectually silence the Clamours of our *intestine Enemies*, stop the Malice of our Foreign Foes, restore our Island to a prosperous State, and complete the Happiness of us all; who can for Shame oppose their Endeavours, or tacitely repine at the Prospect of so great a Blessing? A Blessing so highly beneficial, and so truly desirable in it self, that every Man, who has any Love for his Native Country, any Regard for the Gospel of Peace, will zealously pray for, and industriously promote.

Let us not then any longer provoke God by a continuance in our Sins, to withhold so valuable a Blessing from us; nor let us by Ingratitude affront his Goodness, or by our Impenitence abuse the Mercies we have already received, and this Day commemorate; but let us express our Thanks to God, by Acts of Piety and Religion; our Fidelity to our Sovereign by Affection, Duty, and Service: Let us by our good Lives, and exemplary *Obedience*, shame the *Vicious* into *Righteousness*, and the *Factions* into *Loyalty*, that they seeing our good Works may from them be convinced of their own Errors, be persuaded to lay aside their unreasonable Prejudices, which are the real Causes of our unhappy Divisions, be reconciled in our Days to the Truth, and heartily join with us, To glorify our Father which is in Heaven.

To conclude, Let us unanimously pray, that the whole *British Nation* may be united, as in Interest, so in Affection and Religion, that we may all agree in the *Established Forms of Discipline and Devotion*, that Piety may be promoted, the Church edified, and our Souls saved in the Day of the Lord Jesus. Amen.



F I N I S.

S E R M O N

Dr. S M A R E'S
T H A N K S G I V I N G
S E R M O N

Preach'd before the

House of Commons,

ON
Wednesday, the 29th of May, 1717.

PAUL JORDRELL, Cl. Dom. Com.

Chaplain in Ordinary to His Majesty.

L O N D O N

Printed for JONAS BOWTER at the Bell in
Ludgate-Street. MDCCXVII

~~~~~  
Jovis 30. die Maii, 1717.

**O**rdere*d*, That the Thanks of  
this House be given to  
Dr. Snape, for the Sermon by  
him preach'd before this House  
yesterday at S. Margaret's West-  
minster; and that he be desir'd  
to print the same; and that  
Sir William Wyndham, and  
Mr. Shippen, do acquaint him  
therewith.

PAUL JODRELL, Cl<sup>r</sup> Dom<sup>i</sup> Com<sup>is</sup>

~~~~~  
~~~~~



4  
A <sup>694.9.14</sup>  
S E R M O N

Preach'd before the  
H O N O U R A B L E  
House of Commons,  
A T

*S. Margaret's Westminster,*  
On *Wednesday* the 29th of *May* 1717.

B E I N G

The Day of Publick Thanksgiving to Almighty  
GOD, for having put an End to the Great Re-  
bellion, by the Restitution of King CHARLES II.  
and Royal-Family, and the Restoration of the  
Government.

By *ANDREW SNAPE*, D. D.  
Chaplain in Ordinary to His MAJESTY.

L O N D O N :

Printed for JONAH BOWYER at the *Rose* in  
*Ludgate-Street*. MDCCXVII.

*Letter of Thanks to John Handley. M. A. 1720  
 by the Rev. Dr. Snape, occasion'd by a Discourse in his Parsonage  
 on the 20th of May 1717. Printed at London M. D. C. C. XXVII*

# S E R M O N

Preach'd before the  
 H O N O U R A B L E

H o u s e o f C o m m o n s

AT  
 St. Margaret's Westminster.

On Wednesday the 20th of May 1717.

B E I N G  
 The Day of Publick Thanksgiving to  
 GOD, for having put an End to the Great Re-  
 bellion, by the Restoration of King Charles II.  
 and Royal Family, and the Restoration of the  
 Government.

By ANDREW SNAPE, D. D.

Chaplain in Ordinary to His Majesty.

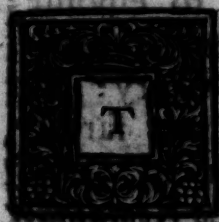
L O N D O N :

Printed for Jonathan BOWLER at the Rose in  
 Ludgate-Street. MDCCLXXII.



PSAL. lxxvi. 10.

*Surely the Wrath of Man shall  
praise thee; the Remainder of  
Wrath shalt thou restrain.*



HIS Psalm is a grateful Commemoration of some great and signal Deliverance, which the Jews had obtained from their Enemies; and most probably was compos'd on Occasion of the miraculous Defeat of Sennacherib, King of Assyria, who had invested Jerusalem with a formidable Host, and put the Inhabitants into the utmost Consternation. Dispirited by the Number, and aw'd by the insulting Threats of their Besiegers, they began to despair of all Succour or Relief, and thought of nothing else but Fire and Sword, Ravage and Desolation, and all the fatal Extremities that could be expected from merciless and inhuman Conquerors.

In the midst of this distressed State, it pleas'd the good Providence of God to send them an unexpected Rescue: The numerous Army that surrounded their Walls, being intimidated by an  
B invisible

## *A Sermon preach'd before*

invisible Power, slaughter'd by an invisible Hand, and the powerful Invader himself soon after slain by the Hands of his two Sons in the Temple of his Idol.

In Memory, I say, of some such Deliverance, and, as learned Interpreters suppose, of the Deliverance I have mention'd, was this Psalm compos'd by *Asaph*: Which, as it all along extolls the irresistible Power of God, and the certain Victory of those, on whose side he engages; so especially this Verse of my Text lets forth the Folly and Madness of contending with God, or such whose Cause he is pleased to espouse; since the fiercest Opposition that can be made, will rebound, in the End, to his Glory: Nor can it last any longer, or prevail any farther, than he himself thinks fit to permit it. *Surely the Wrath of Man shall praise thee; the Remainder of Wrath shalt thou restrain.*

By *Wrath*, we are here to understand rebellious Rage, or tyrannical Fury, an outrageous hostile Bent of Mind, and Thirst after Mischief. By God's *restraining* that *Wrath*, I conceive to be meant, his interposing in due time, cutting short the Designs of such wrathful Men, before they have completed the intended Measure of their Iniquity. And by the *Remainder* of that *Wrath*, so much of their mischievous Contrivance, as is still unaccomplish'd, and which the over-ruling Power of God prevents the Execution of. Whereas the former Part of the Verse, *Surely the Wrath of Man shall praise thee*, seems rather to refer to such of the Devices of  
wicked



wicked Men, as had succeeded in the Fact, tho' they were disappointed in the End propos'd, which, contrary to their Expectation, was converted to the Glory of God, and to their own Shame and Confusion.

This then we may take to be the Importance of the whole Verse. 'Altho' for a while thou sufferest the Sons of Violence to prosper, to insult thine Inheritance, to oppress thine Elect, and to lay Waste thy Dwelling-Place; yet so far is this seeming Prevalence of theirs from diminishing thy Honour, that it only helps to magnify and exalt it: These are the Instruments of thy Vengeance, the Scourges wherewith thou correctest thy beloved Children; these Men do but execute thy Decrees, whilst they are persecuting thy Saints, and whilst they think they resist thy Will, are then actually fulfilling it. But this once perform'd, if they have any Dregs of Fury left, any Vengeance of their own to wreak, after thine is satisfied; thou then interposest with a high Hand, and stretch'd-out Arm to baffle their Devices, and confound their Malice, and answerest them, as thou didst the haughty Sennacherib: \* *Because thy Rage against me, and thy Tumult is come up into mine Ears; therefore will I put my Hook in thy Nose, and my Bridle in thy Lips, and I will turn thee back by the Way, by which thou camest.* <sup>29.</sup> *Isa. xxxvii.*

This is the most natural and receiv'd Interpretation of the Passage now before us. It would take up too much of my Discourse to shew the Reasons for preferring this to other

## *A Sermon preach'd before*

Explications that have been given of the same Text, occasion'd by the Latitude of some Phrases in the Original; and I think it the less necessary, because the Doctrine I shall urge will follow from the Words taken under any of those Meanings.

Now, the Things I would infer from this Observation of the Psalmist, are these.

I. That Almighty God, for wise and good Reasons, does for some time bear with the Instruments of Evil, and suffer them, without Controul, to proceed to a very great and surprizing Height of Impiety. But,

II. That there is a determinate Degree of Wickedness, beyond which the Divine Providence will not suffer them to pass, but manifestly interposes to prevent the fatal Consequences that would follow from an unrestrain'd, unlimited Power, join'd with a malicious Will, and brutal Disposition to Mischief. After which I shall proceed,

III. To consider that particular Act of Providence, in the middle of the last Century, which we are now met to commemorate; when, tho' the Wrath of Man had prevailed to an excessive high Degree, so as to murder the Best of Kings, and overturn the Best of Constitutions; it yet pleas'd



## *the House of Commons.*

pleas'd God to restrain the Remainder of that Wrath, by the Restoration of the Royal Family, and settling us again on our Ancient Foundations.

*I. First,* That Almighty God, for Wise and Good Reasons, does for some time bear with the Instruments of Evil, and suffer them, without Controul, to proceed to a very great and surprizing Height of Impiety.

As to the Fact itself, that this Case does frequently happen; that there are daily Instances of dejected Innocence, and triumphant Villany; that the great Oppressors of Mankind do often flourish in Pomp and Splendor; that they enjoy, or seem to enjoy, an Abundance of all outward Comforts, and fatten on the Spoils of the Injur'd and Oppress'd; that this, I say, is a Case of daily Occurrence, as well the Testimony of Holy Scripture, as the Universal Experience of Mankind, and the Complaints on this very Subject as Universal, make it needless for me to prove.

But it seems a Thing of more Consequence, and far greater Difficulty, to reconcile these Things with the Justice and Holiness of God, and to account for the Equity of such Dispensations, than to prove that such there are. But this Objection, however plausible and popular, is founded on such apparent Mistakes, that nothing but a latent Infidelity, and a secret Distrust of a Future State, where an equal Retribution shall be made for all that we have done and suffer'd

## *A Sermon preach'd before*

fer'd here, could induce Men to insist on it, or to urge it as a Defect of Providence.

One great Mistake in this Objection, is, that it supposes the Miseries of this Life to be the proper Punishment of Vice, and the Pleasures or Honours of it, the Reward of Vertue. Whereas, these are not the Benefits we contract for, nor the Wages for which we serve. A Crown of Glory and Immortality will be the undoubted Portion of such as have Patience to expect it, and who approve themselves God's faithful Servants: As for Temporal Prosperity, so much of it as is conducive to that End, or at least not inconsistent with it, may be added to our Portion, by the bountiful Grace and Favour of our Supreme Lord: But such Kinds or Degrees of it, as that great Searcher of Hearts foresees would prove a Snare to us, and be the Means of beguiling us of a better Inheritance, he most indulgently denies us, and 'tis our great Privilege to be without them.

Nor are good Men promis'd an Exemption from worldly Crosses and Misfortunes: Their Religion and Goodness will indeed protect them from some Evils, but will expose them to others, which Suffering for Righteousness Sake, however grievous in itself, may be made light and easy by this Consideration, that it gives them a sure Title to a proportionable Degree of Blessedness hereafter. And in the mean time, a firm Reliance on that Blessing in Reversion, founded on the Testimony of a good Conscience.



ence; the repeated Experience of their own Steadfastness under the greatest Pressures, by the Assistance of God's Grace; the habitual Readiness they have acquir'd of withstanding all the Temptations that can be offer'd either by soothing Flattery, or terrifying Force; the Command of their Passions, and Conquest of their ghostly Enemies, are such a comfortable Support to the Mind under the severest of worldly Evils; that even then, when they seem most afflicted and distress'd, they are full of inward Joy, and inexpressible Satisfaction.

Again, we have very wrong Notions of the Attributes of God, if we imagine that either his Holiness or his Justice suffer the least Diminution by those promiscuous Events, that befall the Righteous and the Wicked. As to the former, what greater Argument can be given of it, than that he has so strictly forbidden whatsoever is contrary to it, and so solemnly declar'd, that without Holiness no Man shall see the Lord?

'Tis true, he could, if he had pleas'd, have prevented the Evil he forbids, and have enforc'd his verbal Prohibitions by actual Restraints. He could have tyed us up from Vice by the Chains of invincible Necessity, and have dragg'd us to Heaven by the Cords of a blind Fatality. But how then should he have serv'd the great End of his Providence, which was to bestow a Heavenly Kingdom on those, who by a constant Perseverance in Vertue, should render themselves (thro' the Mercies of Christ) proper Objects of it?

## *A Sermon preach'd before*

it? Whereas, if there were no Vice in the World, there could be no such Thing as Vertue: In the Pursuit whereof, if it were not our Choice that directed us, but our Fate that led us, we might with just as much Reason expect a Reward for eating when we are hungry, drinking when we are thirsty, or performing any other Natural Action, as for being honest, chaste, or temperate.

But Man had his Portion assign'd him on very different Terms: He was made a free Agent; he was endu'd with Rational Powers, and an Elective Faculty: He was requir'd and enabled to glorify his Maker, on certain Conditions stipulated between his Creator and him: He lives here in a State of Tryal and Probation, invited and call'd upon to obey, by the strongest Obligations both of Interest and Duty, but tempted to disobey by outward Objects and inward Lusts, and not incapable of yielding to the Force of such Temptations. God has set before him Life and Death, Good and Evil; he has made him sensible what will be the Consequence of either Way of Acting; and after many gracious Calls and fatherly Admonitions to make a wise Choice, leaves both Ways open, and him to the Liberty of that Course, to which his own Discretion, thus prepar'd, thus byass'd and influenc'd to the better and happier Choice, shall guide him.

This is the Way of God's dealing with Mankind; and what Pretence can we take from such a Conduct, to arraign his Purity, or tax him as  
a Lover



a Lover and Encourager of Vice? Not to hinder a thing, when we can, and to approve it, are far from being equivalent Terms: There may be many Reasons, even in Human Conduct, why we choose to bear with that which we condemn: And so there are in the Divine. He makes a strict Proof of the Sincerity of his Servants; that those who are faithful may be made manifest, that their Integrity may shine out with a distinguish'd Lustre: He tries us like Silver, and hopes to find us as pure: He gives us Opportunities of offending him, which he wishes we may never take. He is far from desiring the Death of a Sinner, but rather that he should turn and be sav'd; and in order thereto, he has encouraged, commanded, besought, nay even inclin'd us, and only does not necessitate us to be good; and consequently, his barely permitting that Impiety, which he so manifestly hates, can never be constru'd as an Approbation of it.

Since then God may bear with Sin and sinful Men, without being a Favourer of either, how far, or to what Degree he may bear with them, he sure himself is the most proper Judge. The greatest Irregularities that can prevail in the World, are no more a Reflexion on his Holiness, than the least, and the self-same Reasons will account for both: Some Monsters of an unusual Size may be allow'd of in the Moral, as well as in the Natural World, and there may be Giants in Iniquity, as well as in Stature.

Not That if it had been the constant Method

## *A Sermon preach'd before*

Nor is God any more to be charged with the Want of Justice, than of Purity. As for all the unequal Dispensation of Blessings and Afflictions we complain of, and the little Proportion they bear to the several Demerits of Men; this is a much better Argument that there must be a God, who will judge the World, than that there is none who governs it. The Divine Justice is indeed concern'd, that the good and evil Actions of Men may, sooner or later, meet with a suitable Recompence: But whether in this Life, or the next, or in both; infinite, unerring Wisdom can best direct. Why he should not alway do it in this, or at least, not just at that Time, and in that Manner we would have him, the following Reasons may be offer'd, which I shall but just mention, and forbear to enlarge on them.

Before we presume then to murmur on this score, and complain that we are hardly dealt with, we ought seriously to consider: <sup>1</sup>That whatever Afflictions the best Men suffer, 'tis far less than they deserve: <sup>2</sup>That happy is their Case, who have their Portion of Evil allotted them in this Life: <sup>3</sup>That every Thing the World reputes an Evil, is not so in Reality: <sup>4</sup>That if God should visibly interpose to restrain every Act of Injustice, he must work continual Miracles: <sup>5</sup>That the temporal Interests of good and bad Men are so twisted and link'd together, that the one cannot suffer any remarkable Calamity, without involving the other in a considerable Share of it: <sup>6</sup>That if it had been the constant Method

of



of Providence, to punish every Offence, by sending some immediate temporal Judgment on the Offender; the Race of Men would have been but of short Continuance, and the World had long since been again unpeopled: 7 That if every Fact were to meet with its Reward, as soon as it was committed, it would leave no Room for Faith in Blessings or Punishments to come: Nay, such a Proceeding would almost as necessarily over-rule the Will of Man, and determine it one Way, as if he had no Liberty of Election at all. All which consider'd, I think, we may very fairly and reasonably conclude, that it is not without wise and good Reasons, that Almighty GOD does for some time bear with the Instruments of Evil, and suffer them, without Controul, to proceed to a very great and surprizing Height of Impiety, which was my first Proposition. But which will farther qualify the seeming Hardships, and effectually convince us that there is a Reward for the Righteous, and a GOD that judgeth the Earth; I come now in the

11. Second place to shew, That there is a determinate Degree of Wickedness, beyond which the Divine Providence will not suffer them to pass, but manifestly interposes to prevent the fatal Extremities that would follow from an unrestrain'd, unlimited Power, join'd with a malicious Will, and brutal Disposition to Mischief.